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THE JEWS IN THE WORKS OF THE CHURCH  
FATHERS.

IV.

EUSEBIUS.

EUSEBIUS, whose best work was accomplished on Palestinian soil, in Cæsarea, must often have come into contact with Jews, and been instructed by them on several points.

He is bitterer in tone against the Jews than Origen. "Jew," with him, is a term of opprobrium. He repeatedly calls his opponent Marcellus a Jew (*Eccles. Theol.* II. 2, 3). The phrase, "one of the circumcised,"<sup>1</sup> which he employs, likewise covers a world of scorn and contempt. His work, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, was avowedly written as a direct attack on the Jews.<sup>2</sup> He holds that, in their exposition of Scripture, the Jews are guilty of serious errors, and efforts should be made to induce them to abandon their heresies; that is to say: Religious disputations should be encouraged with the view of persuading them to give up their faith.<sup>3</sup>

Eusebius regards the condition of the Jews as lamentable. What they felt most bitterly was the harsh law which denied them the solace of visiting the holy city of Jerusalem. He describes the wailing and weeping of the poor Jews when they caught even a distant glimpse of Zion's ruins.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dem. Ev.* i. 6 (xxii. 49, M.), τις τῶν ἐκ περιτομῆς.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* i. 1, 11, οὐ . . . κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, ἀπαγε, πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ . . .

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iv. 16 (xxii. 317, M.), Διόπερ εἰκὸς τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς ἀποσφάλλεσθαι . . .

<sup>4</sup> *Comm. in Psalm* lviii. 7-12 (xxiii. 541, M.), Διὸς εἰσέτι καὶ σύμερον ἀμφὶ μὲν τοὺς ὄρους καὶ κύκλῳ παριόντες πόρρωθεν ἴστανται μήδ' ἐξ ἀπόπτου

Eusebius was as much under the influence of Jewish tradition as his predecessors and several of his successors. It has nearly the same authority with him as the Scriptures, and he calls it ἄγραφος παράδοσις=“unwritten tradition.”<sup>1</sup> Its depositaries he terms δευτερωταὶ,<sup>2</sup> and he characterises them in the following happy fashion : “There are people gifted with an uncommon strength of intellect ; and whose faculties have been trained to penetrate to the very heart of Scripture. The children of the Hebrews call them δευτερωταὶ, because they expound Holy Writ.”<sup>3</sup> Eusebius also distinguishes between esoteric and exoteric exegesis. The Agadas he frequently classes with the exoteric exposition.<sup>4</sup> Though there is no clear statement to that effect, we may confidently assume that Eusebius enjoyed direct intercourse with Jews. Cæsarea, the Father’s residence, was inhabited by learned Hebrews ; and we know from the Talmud that disputationes between Jews and Christians were frequent in this town. It will also clearly appear from passages to be hereafter quoted, that Eusebius had a Jewish teacher. His Agadas, of which we give a few specimens, he owed to Jews.

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τὸ πάλαι νενομισμένον αὐτοῖς ιερὸν ἔδαφος θέασασθαι καταξιόμενοι, ἔξωθεν δὲ κυκλοῦντες, πίστιν ἐπάγοντι τὴν . . . Γραφῃ (Ps. lxx. 7). — *Ib.* lxix. 26—29 (xxiii. 153, M.), ‘Ιουδαίων δὲ οὐδένα τολμῶντα ἐπιβαίνειν τῷ πόλει, μήτε γε οἰκεῖν αὐτόθι. ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ οἰκησις ‘Ιουδαίκη περιλέειπται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, ὡς τινα τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἰκεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ δύνασθαι.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Ev.* iv. 22 (xx. 384, M.), ἐν ‘Ιουδαϊκῆς ἀγράφου παραδόσεως.

<sup>2</sup> *Praep. Ev.* xi. 5 (xxi. 852, M.), Δευτερωταὶ . . . οὕτω δὲ φίλον τοὺς ἑηγητὰς τῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς Γραφῶν δονομάζειν.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* xii. 1 (xxi. 952, M.), τοῖς . . . τὴν ἔξιν προβεβηκόσι, καὶ πολιοῖς τὰ φρόνημα, ἐμβαθύνειν καὶ δοκιμάζειν τὸν νοῦν τῶν λεγομένων ἐπιτέτραπται. Τοντοὺς δὲ παισὶν Ἐβραίων Δευτερωτὰς φίλον ἦν ὁνομάζειν ὥσπερ ἐρμηνευτὰς καὶ ἑηγητὰς ὅντας τῆς τῶν Γραφῶν διανοίας.

<sup>4</sup> *Dem. Ev.* vi. 18 (xxii. 461, M.), ὃ δὲ γε ‘Ιώσηπος καὶ τὰς ἔξωθεν ‘Ιουδαϊκὰς δευτερώσεις ἀπηκριβωκώς . . . ἐπάκουσσον. The subject here discussed is the earthquake, the legend concerning which is to be found in the *Seder Olam*, c. xx. ובעמוס הוא אומר שנותם לפני העש ובישועה הוא אמר בshort מות המלך עזיזנו והוא היה ביום הרעש שנאמר וינווע אמות הספדים.

1.—ABRAHAM OBEYED THE PRECEPTS OF THE TORAH  
BEFORE THE REVELATION.

*Demonstratio Evang.* I. 6. *Μεμαρτύρηται γοῦν τὰ προστάγματα καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς, τὰ τε δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ νόμιμα τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸ τῆς Μωσέως διαταγῆς πεφυλαγμένος.* Eusebius infers this from Gen. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.

This is one of the best known Agadas, cp. T. B. Joma, 28b: אמר رب קיימ אברהם כל התורה שנאמר עקיב—אשער שמע. Even the verse on which the statement is based is the same in the Father and the Talmud. Compare *Baba Meziah*, 85b and 87a, where R. Meir already asserts: אברהם אבינו אוכל חולין בטהרה היה.

2.—KING HEZEKIAH'S SIN.

*Commentary on Isaiah xxxix. 1. (VI. 362 M.). συνεζετάξουσιν ἡμῖν καὶ διερευνωμένοις τὰ κατὰ τοὺς παρόντας τόπους, ὁ τῶν Τουδαίων διδάσκαλος ἔλεγεν νενοσηκέναι μεν τον' Εζεκίαν, ἐπεὶ μὴ εἰρήκει φόδὴν εἰς τὸν θεὸν εὐχαριστήριον ἐπὶ τῇ πτῶσει τῶν Ἀσσυρίων, ὡς Μωϋσῆς ἦδεν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καὶ ὡς Δεβόρρα ἐπὶ τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ τοῦ Σισάρα καὶ ὡς Ἄννα ἐπὶ τῇ γεννήσει του Σαμουήλ.*

Jerome, *ad locum*, quotes the same tradition.

This Agada, which is already noteworthy for the direct statement prefacing it—that Eusebius learnt it from his Jewish teacher—is one of the most widely disseminated in Jewish literature. The reflection that Hezekiah was guilty of ingratitude in not chanting a hymn of praise to God after Sennacherib's fall, also occurs in T. B. *Sanhedrin*, 94a: למרבה המשרה ולשלום אין קץ . אמר ר' הנחום דרש בר קפרא בציפוריו מפני מה כל מ"מ שבאמת ציבח פתויה זהה סתום בקש הקב"ה לעשות חילוקה משיח וסנהדריב גוג ומגוג . אמר מדת הדין לפניו הקב"ה ומה דוד מלך ישראל שאמר כמה שירותות ותושבחות לפניך לא עשוו משיח חזקיה שעשו לו כל הנסים

הלו ולא אמר שירה לפניו העשה משה . לכך נמהרם Ib.,  
בנאי הוא להזקיה וסיתו שלא אמרו שירה.

In *Exodus R.*, c. 18, and T. B. *Pesachim*, 117a, it is related that Hezekiah sang a hymn of praise (Hallel) before the destruction of the Assyrian hordes, but there is no hint of his having been censured for omitting to sing one after the occurrence. In *Shir R.*, on c. IV. v. 8, an excuse is put into Hezekiah's mouth:—  
ראוי היה חזקיה לומר שירה על מפלת—  
סחיריב אמר חזקיה תורה שניין עוסק בה מכפרת על  
השירה.

In *Echa R.*, c. I., the excuse takes the following form:—  
חזקיה אמר אין בי כה.....לומר שירה. From all these passages it is obvious that Hezekiah's omission to compose a special hymn of praise largely exercised the imagination of the Agadists. In T. J. *Pesachim*, towards the end, a dictum is found, couched in so authoritative a form that it sounds almost like an Halacha, to the effect that a miraculous deliverance should be followed by a thanksgiving:—  
כשהקב"ה עוזה لكم נסים רחיו אומרים שירה. To this the cogent objection is raised that Mordecai and Esther did not sing a hymn after Haman's fall. *Jalkut*, on Isaiah, § 306, quotes a passage from the lost Jelamdenu, in which the duty of a thanksgiving is deduced from Exodus xv. 1:   
ויאמרו לאמר לדורות. A contrast is also drawn between the songs of Moses, Deborah and David, and Hezekiah's culpable negligence—a feature also dwelt upon in Eusebius. In all the above passages, however, we miss the detail, found in the Father's recital of the legend, that Hezekiah's sickness was a Divine punishment for his omission of a thanksgiving. Nevertheless, this, too, comes from a Jewish source. The following passage is excerpted from Jelamdenu by the *Jalkut* on 2 Kings, § 243:—  
כשעללה סחיריב עליו והפכו האלים לפניו הוות לימייר  
שירה על מפלתו ולא אמר ומה היה לו והפכו האלים במטה  
כדי שיאמר שירה שנאמר מכתב להזקיה.

This legend illustrates the advantages that would accrue from a systematic history of the Agada. Such a history is

however only possible after a comparison of all available auxiliary sources, among which the Church Fathers occupy an important place.

### 3.—BERODACH BALADAN AND HEZEKIAH.

*Comm. in Is. xxix. 1* (vi. 361 M.) τὸν δὲ Βαβυλώνιον ἐγνωκέναι τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς νόσου ρῶσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεσταλκέναι πρὸς αὐτὸν ἄνδρας.....ἐπειδὴ συνέβη τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην καθ' ἣν τὸ σημεῖον τῆς τοῦ ἥλιου ἀναδρομῆς ὡρῶν γεγενῆσθαι δισπλασίων, μὴ γάρ λατέν τοῦ τοὺς Βαβυλωνίους δεινούς ὅντας περὶ τὴν τῶν ἀστρων δε ὠρίαν καὶ.....συνεῖδον ὡς ὑπὸ κρείτους περίηνέχθη εἰς τουπισώ δυναμέως ..... ταῦτα μὲν δὲ Εβραῖος.

The same Agada is given in Ephraem Syrus' work (*Op. Syr. I. 562, 563 R.*) on 2 Kings xx. 10, as one of Jacob Edessenus' *Scholia*. It is introduced in the following impressive phrases: בְּמַלְאָה הָלִין סֻכְלָא מִתְשִׁיא אֵיתָ דָלוֹ לְכָל—נָשׁ יְדִיעָ וְדָעָן זְדָקָא דְלָגְלָילָא אֲנָא אִירָחוֹי הָא אָמָר אֲנָא. Graetz has discussed the latter passage in the *Monatsschrift*, 1854, p. 383. The Agada inspires him, however, with but little respect, because it is not given by Ephraem but by Jacob Edessenus, who belongs to a later period. The passage in the commentary on the parallel chapter in Isaiah, which is, indeed, given in Ephraem's name, Graetz suspects to have been interpolated from Jacob Edessenus' *Scholion*. The historian has however overlooked the fact that the earlier Father, Eusebius, also has this Agada. By the time it reached Edessenus, it had received several additions, e.g., the recital of the miracle of the turning back of the sun by the Ninevite Jews to the Babylonian king; and the statement that his native Jewish subjects enlightened him as to Hezekiah's importance. The Agada, in the form in which Eusebius presents it, is found in Jewish sources. Thus T. B. *Sanhedrin*, 96a: בַּעַת הַחִיא שְׁלָחֶ בְּרָאַדְךָ בְּלָאַדְךָ.....מְשׁוּם כִּי חַלָּה—חוּקִיה וַיַּחֲזַיק שְׁדָר לִיה ? וַיַּשְׁבַּת הַשְׁמָשׁ עַשְׂרֶה מְעוּלָות.....אֶל מַאי

האי אל הזקה חלש ואיתפה אמר איכה גברא כי האי ולא בעינה  
היא. The detail is, however, wanting that the Babylonians, by their knowledge of astronomy, discovered that the sun-dial had turned back. We read, instead, in a passage excerpted from the Pesikta (*Jalkut*, 2 Kings, § 244) another account of the manner in which the Babylonians were apprised of the miracle. מרוודך בן יבלאדן היה למוד לאכול בשש שעות וישן עד תשע שעות וכיוון שחזור גלגל חמה ישן לו ועמד ומצאו שחריות בקש להרוג אה כל עבדיו אמר הנחרט אהתי לישן כל היום וכל הלילה אמרו ליה מרוי יומא הוא דהדר ביה ואלו הוו של חזקיה החזרו אמר להם איך כי האי גברא כו'.

We must confess that the Church Father's narrative, *viz.*, that the Babylonians discovered the miracle by their astronomical calculations, is more reasonable than the *Jalkut* legend. Here is another illustration of the usefulness of foreign sources for the purpose of rectifying the Agadas, so many of which sound strange.

#### 4.—THE TRAITOR SHEBNA.

*Comm. in Is. xii. 10, 11 (VI. 249 M.).* "Ελεγε τοίνυν ὁ Εβραῖος ἀρχιερεὰ γεγενῆσθαι τὸν Σομνάν (שׁבְנָא) τρυφητὴν τινὰ καὶ τὸν βίον ἀσεμνον ἄνδρα, ὡς καὶ προδοῦναι τὸν λαόν.

Jerome comments on the passage "Supra diximus Sobnam fuisse pontificem qui Assyriis prodidat civitatem, sed quia hoc traditionis est Hebraicæ et Scriptura non loquitur..."

All the details of this Agada recur in Jewish sources. Thus, *Leviticus R.*, c. 5, Shebna's treachery is discussed in T. B. *Sanhedrin* 26a. Eusebius's brief suggestion that Shebna was sensual (*τρυφητής*) is repeated in T. B. *Sanhedrin*, 26a, אמר ר' אלעזר שׁבְנָא בֶּעֶל הנאה היה כתיב הכא לך בא אל הסוכן וכתיב התרם ותהי לו סוכנת.

This somewhat obscure passage Rashi explains in the following gloss, **כמשמי ויא משכוב זכר**. After what the Father tells us, we must decide that the explanation of the Father **יש אומרים** hits the correct sense of the Agada.

### 5.—INTERPRETATION OF ZECH. XI. 8.

The text **וְאַחֲרֵיךְ אֶת שְׁלָשָׁת הַרְעִים בַּיּוֹרָה אֶחָד** received, from a very early period, the following Christological interpretation: That, after Jesus' advent, the three powerful estates, Sovereignty, Priesthood and Prophecy, disappeared from Israel's midst. This explanation recurs in Eusebius, *Dem. Ev.* X. 1 (XX. 747 M.). Jerome (on Zech. xi. 8) quotes it only to reject it. His sound common sense leads him to prefer the Jewish exegesis, which applies the text to Moses, Aaron and Miriam. Strange to say, he does not give it in the Jews' name, as Graetz already noted in the *Monatssch.* 1854, p. 189. The historian has neglected to consult the older authority, Eusebius, whom Jerome follows in so many places. It is clearly evident from Eusebius, *ibid.*, that this exegesis was not specially Jewish, but was general at that period. The passage quoted by Graetz from T. B. *Taanith* 9a:—**וְאַחֲרֵיךְ אֶת שְׁלָשָׁת הַרְעִים בַּיּוֹרָה אֶחָד וְכֵי בַּיּוֹרָה אֶחָד מְתוּ—** **וְהָלָא מְרוּם מִתְהָ בְּנִיכָן וְאַחֲרֵן בְּאָב וְמָשָׁה בְּאָדָר**, completely coincides with *Seder Olam R.*, c. X., which first mentions the distinctive blessings these three pastors brought the people: **אַחֲרֵן = עַמוֹד עַנְן • מָשָׁה = מַן • מִרְיָם = בָּאָר**.

### V.

#### EPHRAEM SYRUS.

In passionate hatred of the Jews, in contempt and active hostility towards the people of the covenant, Ephraem of Syria surpasses all the Church Fathers who came before

and all those who went after him. His voluminous writings are filled with rage and animosity against the Jews. He would like to destroy them with the fire of his words and to draw down upon their heads, by his prayers, the avenging lightning of an offended Deity. Whence this hatred? Whence this malignant spirit of persecution? It is difficult to find an adequate reason, especially as Ephraem hardly ever came into contact with the Jews, and therefore could never have been insulted by them. His resentment seems to have been aroused and stimulated by the marvellous power of resistance shown by the old creed. In his immediate neighbourhood, Babylon, the ancient people flourished with unexpected vigour. The serious blow which Julian the Apostate dealt Christianity, and which was indirectly of benefit to the Jews, may also have contributed to the contemporary Father's prejudice. He sought to relieve his feelings by pouring out vials of wrath on the defenceless Hebrews.

Ephraem terms the Jews **טעיא גזירה**, the circumcised vagabonds.<sup>1</sup> Judaism is a worthless vineyard that cannot bear fruit.<sup>2</sup> He frequently refers to their wretched condition, which he regards as a punishment sent from God.<sup>3</sup> Because they reviled Jesus, the Lord has banished them from their land, and now they are condemned to wander over the whole surface of the earth.<sup>4</sup>

The golden hopes which the Emperor Julian's policy raised in the Jews' hearts, proved vain and illusory. As soon as Christianity triumphed, it turned with redoubled fury on its indestructible foe. After Julian's death Ephraem composed four hymns: against the Emperor Julian, the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. Syr.* II. 469. Cp. Lengerke, *De Ephraemi Syri arte Hermeneutica* (Königsberg, 1838), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See Zingerle, *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, II., 292.

<sup>3</sup> In Gen. xl ix. 8 (*Op. Syr.* I., 108).

<sup>4</sup> In 2 *Reg.* ii. at the end (*Op. Syr.* I., 523) **נָרְשׁוּ אָנוֹן לְבָד מִן אַתְּרָא** **דָלְחוּן וּרְקָוּ לְהֹן בְּכָל פְּנִיתָא דְמַתְעֲמִינִיתָא**.

Apostate ; against the heresies ; and against the Jews.<sup>1</sup> We quote from these envenomed productions the following passages : "The Jewish people broke out into maddening noise ; the circumcised blew their trumpets and rejoiced that he [Julian] was a magician and worshipper of idols. They saw again the image of the beast on his [Julian's] gold pieces ; they again viewed the bull of shame, and danced round it with trumpets and timbrels, for they recognised in this beast<sup>2</sup> their ancient golden calf. The heathen bull, imprinted on their hearts, he stamped on his coins for the delectation of the Jews, who were enamoured of him.<sup>3</sup> The circumcised blew their trumpets and behaved like madmen.<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem put to shame the accursed crucifiers who had dared to announce that they would rebuild the ruins their sins had wrought.<sup>5</sup> Fire broke out and destroyed the scholars who had read in Daniel that the desolation would endure for ever. Look ! you (Christians) live at peace, free from the 'possessed,' free from contact with the servants of the devil."<sup>6</sup>

What especially exasperates Ephraem is that the Jews will not give up their hopes ; notwithstanding the calamities with which they have been visited, they still cherish the firm conviction that the Future belongs to them and their religion—not to Christianity. The narrative of the two concubines who appeared before Solomon for judgment, is applied by Ephraem to the rival creeds, the Church and the Synagogue. Of the latter, he says : The Synagogue continually protests that her son is the living child and pleasing to God. She, furthermore, loudly asserts that the

<sup>1</sup> על יולינוס מלכָא דאחנָא ועל יוֹלְפָנָא טַעַיָּא וּלְיְהוּדִיא in *S. Ephraemi Syri Carmina Nisibena*, Ed. Bickel (Lipsiae, 1866), and Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri . . . aliorumque Opera Selecta* (= O), Oxonii, 1865. The hymns are translated into German by Hahn in the periodical *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, II. 335 (Innsbruck, 1878).

<sup>2</sup> An allusion on a coin of Julian with an altar and a beast, being the sign of the restitution of Paganism.

<sup>3</sup> O. p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> O. p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> O. p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> O. p. 19.

Law of Moses is endowed with eternal life. Thus the Synagogue of the misguided perpetually contends with the Church of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The hopes of the Jews find still more emphatic expression in the view that, as soon as the expected Messiah shall have arrived,<sup>2</sup> God's people will reign supreme.

It is interesting to learn the precise nature of these hopes which dominated the Jewish mind in the fourth century. A passage bearing on this subject may here be appropriately quoted from the Sermon against the Jews:—"Now, look! this people dreams that it will return; the people which angered God in all that it did awaits and demands a time when it will have satisfaction. As soon as this people hears of a return, they lift up their voices and shout, 'Jerusalem will be rebuilt!' Again and again they listen, for they long for the return. 'The fame of the capital will be great; its name will be glorious,' they repeatedly exclaim."

Very honourable to the Jews is the testimony which an embittered foe, like Ephraem, is forced to bear to the expansive power of Judaism, even at that time of severe oppression. We learn from Ephraem, as we have learnt from Justin and Origen, that the old faith received at this period numerous accessions from heathendom. Ephraem, of course, declares that the heathens are deluded by Jewish missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

Christianity still felt itself called upon to defend its

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<sup>1</sup> In 1 *Reg.* iii. 16 (*Op. Syr.* I. 452) תְּהִתִּין נָשׂוֹן לַעֲדַתָּא וְלַכְנִישַׁתָּא רַמְזָן . כְּנוּשַׁתָּא דִין . . . . הַשָּׁא מִן קֻעִיא וְאָמְרָא דְבָרָא דִילָה חֵי הוּא לְאֱלֹהָא וְלָה שְׁפָר . וְתוֹבָ דְּנָמוֹסָא דְּמִשָּׁא דְמִיתָּחֵיא דְלָעֵלָם יְהָב לְיהָ . הַיְכִיל כְּנוּשַׁתָּא דְטִצְׂיָא עִם עֲדַתָּא דְמִשְׁיחָא אֲמִינָאָית נְצִיאָ.

<sup>2</sup> In 1 *Reg.* i. 5 (*Op. Syr.* I. 441) אֶלְא אָפָ בְּיוֹמָתָן מִתְחֹזָה שׁוּעָלִיה וְאֵיתָ—: לְיהָ סְבָרָא דְלְשׁוֹלָתָנִיה דְתָאָבָל נְסָק בְּמַאֲתִיתָה דְרָר מִשְׁיחָא דְמִסְבָּא לְהָ.

<sup>3</sup> In 2 *Reg.* xix. 1 (*Op. Syr.* I., 558): טְוֹפָס אָנֵן וְמִכְבָּנוֹתָהּוּן דְרַשְׁיָעָא: הַנּוּן דְמַנְסִין לְהִימָנוֹת דְהָלֵי אֱלֹהָא וְמִשְׁׂדֵלִין מְחַתְּחַתִּין לְהָוֹן לְמִשְׁבָק לְעַדְתָה דְמִשְׁיחָיָא וְדְלְכִנוּשַׁתָּא דְסִטְנָא נְסִטָוּן.

position against the Jews. In the Sermon against the Jews, Ephraem exhorts them: "Come let us examine the prophets and see whether their predictions have been fulfilled." From the course of the address we learn the chief points of controversy between Jews and Christians at this period. Opening with the challenge, "Let the accursed Jews search the Scriptures and become wise," Ephraem seeks, in the first place, to deduce from Gen. xlix. 10, 11, that the Jews' hopes are futile. "If Judah wields the sceptre and has an interpreter, the prophecies are not fulfilled. But if the sceptre has departed and the voice of prophecy is silent, then should the Jews be ashamed of their obstinacy and stiffneckedness." Another point of controversy was the interpretation of Zechariah ix. 9, and of Psalm viii. 3. It is easy to understand that Ephraem indirectly attacks the Jewish exegesis on several other points. The passages have been collated by Gerson, *Die Commentarien des Ephraem Syrus im Verhältniss zur Jüdischen Exegese* (Breslau, 1868), page 8. To this brochure the reader is referred.

Intrinsically Ephraem's commentaries are incomparably more valuable than those of the Church Fathers whom we have already discussed. Ephraem proceeded to the exposition of the Scriptures with a sufficient equipment of preliminary studies. In the first place he possessed a good knowledge of Hebrew. This, however, is not the general opinion. Abraham Geiger, for example, said (*Jüdische Zeitschrift*, VII. 69), "It is quite natural that Ephraem, though ignorant of Hebrew, should have interlarded his commentaries with Midrashic elements which he learnt from his intercourse with the Jews," a statement absolutely unwarranted.

Schaf, more recently (Smith-Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, II. 142), also seeks to prove from a few instances that Ephraem was unacquainted with Hebrew. Although, in itself, it does not greatly concern Jewish literature whether any individual Father of the Church knew Hebrew or not, still this point ought to be settled in order to enable

us to appraise Ephraem's efforts at their just value. It is by no means the same thing whether Jewish exegesis is criticised by a competent Hebraist or by an ignoramus. If it should turn out that Ephraem understood the Hebrew text, it is clearly unfair to charge him with rashly intruding into a domain in which he was incompetent to judge.

In his Commentaries Ephraem frequently refers to the original text. This should show whether he knew Hebrew or not. The mere reference counts for something. Neither Clement of Alexandria, nor Basil, nor Gregory of Nazianzus ever quotes the original text.

1. *Commentary on Genesis i. 1* (*Op. Syr.* I. 116), Ephraem discusses the Hebrew word אָתְ—

הָדָא בֶּרֶת קַلָּא קִידּוֹמֹת סִימָא עֲבָרִיתָא אִירְתָּה דָאִיתָה סָרִיאָתָה לְהַנוּ דֵין לְשָׁמְיָא וְלְאַרְתָּה לְדֵין יְהָא אָתְ.

This remark is unobjectionable.

2. *Gen. i. 2.* He endeavours to explain the obscure *תְהֻחוּ וּבְהֻחוּ*, according to Severus' *Excerpts*, as follows:—

תְהֻחוּ וּבְהֻחוּ • הַנּוּ ذָן צְדִיא וּשְׁחִיא בְצִיחָחָא דֵין אַחֲרֵנוּ אָמַר אֲרַעַה אִירְתָּה הוּת לֹא מְתַחֲזִינָתָא וְלֹא מְתַקְנָתָא וְלֹא מְתַחֲזִינָתָא אָמַר אִירְתָּה הוּת מְטָל תְהוֹמָה דְמִיאָה הוּ דְקַבָּא הוּ וְחַשֵּׁר לִיהְיָה מִן שִׁית פְּנִיָּתָא בְדִמוֹת עֲולָא הוּ דְכַרְיךְ בְשִׁלְתָה אַבְנָוּ מְרַבְּעָא דָאִיתָה וְלֹא מְתַקְנָתָא מְטָל דְלֹא גָלֵן הוּ אֲפִיהָ.

Schaf sees, in this quotation, a clear proof that Ephraem did not know what *תְהֻחוּ וּבְהֻחוּ* meant. But when we examine the passage in question carefully, we see that the expression צְדִיא וּשְׁחִיא, "empty and desolate" is a correct rendering. The next excerpt in Severus, to the effect that the earth was invisible because of the multitude of waters that covered it, and that this invisibility constituted an imperfection, is the expansion of a just idea, but is not intended to be taken as literal exegesis. Ephraem himself, in fact, only says, I. 6:— דָאִיתָה הוּת תְהֻחוּ וּבְהֻחוּ הַנּוּ דֵין — צְדִיא וּשְׁחִיא.

3. *Gen. i. 21* (I. 18). Ephraem speaks of the Behemoth—Job xl. 15 (10) and Psalm l. (xlix.) 10—as none but a sound

Hebraist could. To me it is inconceivable how Schaf can quote this passage in support of his theory. It runs as follows:—

תניינא דין רות' בא דאתבריו ואפנ ללויתן נב'א בימא מתרמיין  
ליה אלא לבהמות אווב ביבשא משרא לא אפ דוד דעב'א אמר  
דעעל אלף טוילין אויהה מרועיתיה הנודיין מרובעתיה כבר דין  
בתר דאתבריו אהתפלנו להון אתרותא דלוייתן נאמר בימא  
ובבהמות ביבשא.

This rendering of Behemoth is not strange and peculiar, as Schaf supposes. The ancient translators differ as to the meaning. The Septuaginta has, in Psalms and Job, *τὰ θηρία* (Vulgate *jumenta*). Aquila and Theodotion, in both passages, *κτήνη* (Field, *Hexapla* II. 76, 173), while the *Peschito* gives in Psalms, *בעירא ותורא*, but in Job only *בבָהָמוֹת*.

4. Schaf is guilty of a serious error in remarking that Ephraem could have had but a slight acquaintance with Hebrew, seeing that he is forced to have recourse to Syrian roots, in order to explain Hebrew words. His instance is where on Gen. xi. 29 (I. 59) the Father says:—  
**הִי דְמַטֵּל**—**שׁוֹפְרָה אֲתָקְרִית אַסְכָּה**, “Sara was called Isca because of her beauty.” Schaf seems to be unaware that this is an Agadic interpretation which, however, rests on the fact that in the Hebrew word a Syriac root was discerned. *Seder Olam R.* c. II., towards the end, **וְלֹמַה נִקְרָא שַׁמָּה יִסְכַּח שַׁחַכְל סְכִין** **בִּיפִיה**; more definitely in *Megilla*, 14a, and *Sanhedrin*, 69b, **יִסְכַּח שַׁחַכְל סְכִין בִּיפִיה**; according to another interpretation, **שְׁמַכְתָּה בֶּרוּחַ הַקְדֵּשׁ**. (Cp. Gerson, *ib.*, p. 19, who, however, does not cite the passage from the *Seder Olam*.) In languages as closely correlated as Hebrew and Syriac, this mode of exposition is perfectly legitimate. In the *Mechilta* on Ex. xii. 4, **הַכְסֹו סְרָסִי** (לְשׁוֹן).

Will any one assert that the author of that interpretation did not understand Hebrew? Why then should this exegesis appear strange when employed by Ephraem, especially as it is obviously homiletic and Agadic, rather than

grammatical? Compare the Syriac derivation of the names of Job's three daughters (Job xlvi. 4).

5. *Gen. xxxvi. 24* (I. 184):—**חַלְפָה** דָאשְׁכָה מֵא עֲבֹרִיא אָמֶר—**אַשְׁכָה** גַּנְבָּרָא בְּמִדְבָּרָא. Ephraem's explanation here coincides with that given by Onkelos and the Samaritan version, as is already noted by J. Perles, *Meletemata Peschittoiana*, page 9.

6. In the sermon against the Jews (*Op. Syr.* III. 218), Ephraem translates the words **בְּנֵי אַתָּנוּ** (*Gen. xlvi. 11*) "and his ass, my son." But in his commentary (I. 108, 190) the correct rendering, "the ass's colt" is twice given; and in the Sermon, too, the same rendering occurs (III. 224). This error, therefore, proves nothing against Ephraem's knowledge of Hebrew, as Schaf himself is inclined to admit.

7. *Deut. ix. 9* (I. 273). Ephraem says: **אִיכָּא נִיר דָאמֶר**—He had, therefore, read the original text and understood it.

8. *Joshua xv. 28* (I. 305):—**וּבְזִוְתְּךָ הַנּוּ קּוֹרְיָה כֵּد לֹא**—*Ephraem exposes a mistake in the Peschito and appeals to the Hebrew text.*

9. At the beginning of his commentary to the Book of Judges (I. 308), he draws a distinction between the terms **שָׁבְטִים שְׁפָטִים** which is irreproachable.

עֲבֹרִיא אָמֶר 'חַכִּימָתָא דְּדָרוֹכָתָג עַנְיָ' (I. 316) **אַכְוֹרָתָה**. It is indeed surprising that he should have understood **שְׁרוֹתִיה** in the sense of concubines. This may, however, be an exegetical licence and not a real mistake.

10. *Jud. v. 30* (I. 316), **בָּרָת קָלָא עֲבֹרִיא יַנְعַצֵּר**, It is indeed surprising that he should have understood **שְׁרוֹתִיה** in the sense of concubines. This may, however, be an exegetical licence and not a real mistake.

11. On 1 *Sam. xxi. 8* (I. 376), **גּוֹנִיתָא הִי לֹן עַם עֲבֹרִיא וּמְרֻנִיאתָה מַתְפְשָׁקָא עַל מָא דְסָעָרִין** **נַעַצֵּר** is common to Syriac and Hebrew. It specially refers to the pressing of grapes and olives." With the imperfect sources at our command we cannot tell that **נַעַצֵּר** had not this meaning

in Hebrew. But our author has certainly a right to draw an inference from Syriac to Hebrew.

12. *2 Kings* iii. 1 (I. 523), he explains the Hebrew term נקָדָא דהַרְכָּא אָמַר כִּתְבָּא שְׁמָאַחֲוֹ דְּמַנּוֹ עֲבָרִיא נְבָה וּתְרוּגְמִיהָ—נקָדָא דֵעַנָּא רְעוּתָא דֵעַנָּא הַנוּ דָמְתָרְסָא סְוָנָא דֵעַנָּא. No objection can be offered either to the note that here Hebrew and Syriac coincide or to the explanation suggested.

עֲבָרִיא דֵין רָוחֶב סּוֹכָלָא אַהֲרָנָא, וְהַפְּכָא מְהֻיאָא. הַנוּ אָמַר לֹא בְּמַהְרָא רַאֲחָא. This is a studied reference to the Hebrew text.

We deem it unnecessary to give further proofs in support of our assertion, that Ephraem had a considerable knowledge of the sacred tongue.

We now turn to the question: What is Ephraem's relation to the Jewish Agada? After Lengerke, Gaertz and Gerson's thorough investigations, such a question might possibly be deemed superfluous; but such is not the case. That the Father incorporated with his commentaries a mass of Agadas and Midrashim is clear. But how did he come by them? Were his informants contemporary Jews, or Christians of the school of Edessa or Nisibis? All the other Church Fathers, to whom we have referred in this Essay, usually quote Agadas in the name of the Jews. Ephraem never does so. We frequently meet with such phrases as: אַוְתָּה—אנְשָׂא מִן מִפְשְׁךָןָא. אַנְשָׂיִן—אַנְשָׂיִן אִםְרוּ. אַנְשָׂיִן אִיךְ מִשְׁלָמְנוֹתָהוּן. אַנְשָׂיִן אִמְרוּ (Lengerke, pp. 14-20), the majority of which refer to the Jews. That he never distinctly names them shows his marked hostility. Hence it is extremely unlikely that any direct communication took place between the Jews and Ephraem. He would scarcely have so far overcome his prejudices as to associate with Jews. Of course, it is conceivable that there may have been two periods in Ephraem's life; one, when he was on intimate terms with Jews, and obtained an extensive acquaintance with their views; another, when he

avoided saying anything in their name. This is however, after all, a mere hypothesis, unsupported by historical facts. The question itself we have not sufficient information to settle.

The Agadas found in Ephraem's writings are too numerous to be exhaustively treated within the limits of the present essay. I refer the reader to the works of Lengerke, Graetz and Gerson, and will only quote a few specimens which those investigators have left unnoticed.

I. Comm. in *Exod.* xiv. 24 (*Op. Syr.* I. 215): מפשטה hei : פשיטה hoth liha aidia l'msha aid hei dhoth mun berken. Moses, at the passage of the Red Sea, stretched forth his hands in the same manner as he afterwards did in the battle with Amalek. This remark is quite in the Agadic vein, though I have failed to find its parallel in the Jewish authorities.

II. 1 *Kings* iii. 5 (I. 451): אعلا בזנא אחרנא נברא עבריא נסכו להוּן בונשא רחוב ורות ומצעא ברת מלכא דגשור Ephraem defends the view that heathen women could only become the wives of Jews after embracing their husbands' creed. Rahab, Ruth, and Maacha, the daughter of the king of Geshur, are given as instances. The Book of Ruth is the authority for the statement in Ruth's case; the Agada in the case of Rahab. Thus T. B. *Megilla*, 14a: חולדת הנבואה מבני בניה של רחוב הזונה היהת...דאיגיירה ונסבה יהושע.

T. B. *Sebachim*, 115b, ואחר חמשים שנה ארגיירה.

*Shir R.* on I. 2, רחוב שמעה וארגיירה.

הלא שמעה רחוב ובאהה ורבקה בך.

About Maacha's conversion I could find nothing in the Agada.

III. 2 *Sam.* xi. 14 (I. 408): אנשין mun amlein dioab ashrahoud : מלרא דודוּן עם ברת שבע... וידע הוא עלת קרייה דאוריא... אירוי הכליל לעבדא מודם דארפקר אלא לאגררא סמה לתריה וסביר דודמה ושםה דודוּן בזורה הו "Many assert that Joab

discovered David's relations with Bathsheba, and knew why Urijah had been summoned. He therefore executed the orders he had received from the king, but preserved the letter of authorisation, so as to have David's life and reputation at his mercy." Ephraem spins out the legend at great length. Joab, he tells us, wished to enact, with David, the rôle of Abner with Ishbosheth. He was also continually under the apprehension that David would call him to account for Abner's murder. The letter concerning Urijah would, he thought, save him from death and give him the upper hand. Here is undoubtedly a genuine Jewish tradition, but I have, unfortunately, been unable to trace it to Jewish sources.

IV. 2 *Kings* iv. (I. 256) — אמרין דאנרתא הדא אנרתא — דעובדיא חותה הו דביבתא דאהאב בנכסיא תלמידיה דאליא דפצי אנון למא נביין... ובכפנא תריסי אנון... זדמיא מן דבא בהו שרכא יוף כספא מן בית מלכא ודואשתבק ברר מורה חובה לאנרתא "They say that this woman was the widow of Obadiah, Ahab's former steward and Elijah's disciple, who had rescued four hundred prophets from Jezebel's hands and maintained them during the famine. During the distress he had borrowed money of the royal household, and at his death the debt was still unpaid." The parallel of this beautiful Agada is found complete in every detail, in the Jewish sources. That the woman was Obadiah's wife is stated in the *Targum Jonathan* on the passage *בעל מית*. The steward's indebtedness is referred to in *Exod. R.*, c. 31: — כספו לא נתן בנשך זה עובדיה שהיה עשיר אפוטרופום של אהאב והוצאה כל ממונו לצדקה وزון את העניים והיה לו בנסך מיהורם וככו'.

We notice here an even verbal agreement between the Jewish narrative and that of Ephraem.

V. 2 *Kings* v. 1 (I. 531) — ומן מלרא הדא נסבו אנשין — החורייא ואמר (ואמרו?) דחנא אוrhoוי הוו גברא הו דקטליה ביד פארא דענקמן אוידה תמיימות... אלא הליין מן החורייא שרירתא גלייזן אנון. "Hence many derived the fable that

this [Naaman] was the man who had accidentally slain [Ahab] with an arrow." This noteworthy Agada I could find nowhere else.

אשברו אنسין מן ספרה—  
דzon מניינא ראהו דאלפה שביעיא . דבה מהנהמן כלחון מירא  
ואמרו זובנא דעלמא לה להנא מניינא תחם ברוחה . שbowעא גיר  
חוות אורתוי מפרשנא זובנא

This view of the duration of the earth entirely agrees with the familiar Agada in T. B. *Sanhedrin*, 97a:—  
תנא דברי—  
אליהו ששנת אלפים שנה הו עולם

A similar tradition in Jerome is treated by Rahmer:—  
“*Die hebräischen Traditionen in den Werken des Hieronymos*” (Breslau, 1861), p. 22. A multitude of opinions on *Chiliasm* has also been collected from the Church Fathers and Talmudic doctors by Grünwald, *Verhältniss der Kirchen-väter zur talmudischen und midraschischen Literatur* (in Königsberger's *Monatsblätter*, p. 102, also separately printed, Jungbunzlau, 1891).

S. KRAUSS.

(*To be continued.*)